



# VALUES WITHOUT BORDERS:

“CULTURAL DIPLOMACY” STARTS AT HOME

— *Lecture by John Holden*

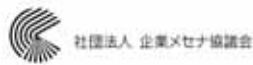
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## Values without borders: "Cultural Diplomacy" starts at home



Photo by Satoru Seki

John Holden

Good evening, everyone. I would like to begin by thanking the Kigyo Mecenat Kyogikai and the British Council for co-sponsoring the event but most of all to the Japan Foundation for bringing me to Japan. It is 30 years since my last trip to Japan where I spend five weeks in Kyoto living with a very old friend of mine called Alex Kerr who went on to write a book called "Lost Japan" and another called "Dogs and Demons." But in those days he lived in a very traditional Japanese house in Kyoto with no electricity, no heating; we slept on the floor, futons, rice pillows, 18th century mosquito nets. It was very uncomfortable, but very wonderful; great experience. This time it has been rather more luxurious and staying in nice hotels. But it's been a very varied trip. I have managed to do zazen and onsen. I have seen all sorts of places, met all sorts of interesting people. So, I want to say a very, very big thank you indeed to the Japan Foundation for making that possible.

Now, I am talking tonight about the subject of cultural diplomacy and I know the reason why I have been invited to do it is because of a small book that I co-wrote for a think-tank called Demos in London. And if you want to read this book, it has two virtues: The first virtue is that it is short; the second virtue is that it is free. Then you can download it from this website, [www.demos.co.uk](http://www.demos.co.uk).

Now I think before I start talking about cultural diplomacy, I should tell you something about what Demos is, because the word think-tank, the term think-tank seems to mean different things in different parts of the world. I know in Japan, very often, think-tanks are within corporations. I know in America usually they are very politically partisan.

Demos is a bit different from most think-tanks. It

was set up in 1993 in response to a failure of politics. At that time in the UK, politics was very discredited. Nobody had very much enthusiasm for either party; a bit like today. The idea behind Demos was to reinvigorate the political process to get more people out to vote, but also to try to provide interesting ideas not just to government but to society at large about how beneficial change might happen.

So, we are not corporate, we are not within a corporate environment. We are not government, we are not funded by government, and we are not attached to a political party. So, we are not all those things. What we are is independent; we are not-for-profit, we are for the public good and our mission is public education.

Now, one thing we do is that, traditionally, problems within government have been solved within 19th century ideas of government departments. So, you have defense, transport, health, and so on. One of the animating ideas behind Demos was to say that most problems in society cut across these boundaries. So, rather than thinking about health, we might look at ageing, for example, and think about how getting old is affected by transport, by the arts, by health policy, and so forth. We might look at, instead of defense, look at security, and think about how security is affected by international relations, education systems, housing policy, and so on and so forth. So, it's a somewhat different approach.

The other thing that we thought, the other animating principle was that change happens sometimes outside the realm of government. So, it's not always government action that creates change. Change happens through what happens in schools, in families, in the workplace, in public spaces, so it is important to

address all these areas as well as talking to government.

So, over the years Demos has grown, not so much in size because the staff is still very small, it is only 22-23 people, but it has developed in two ways: One way is through the creation of networks. We have always believed that networks are the most important organizing principle of the 21st century and that connections make things happen. So, we have always tried to be a very well-networked organization.

The second thing is that about eight or nine years ago, we suddenly realized, suddenly understood the power of the internet. Up until this point, everything that we produced was printed and distributed by post or by hand. So when we wrote something, we printed maybe 1000 copies and gave 500 away. We suddenly realized that we were not in the publishing business; we were in the ideas business. And to get those ideas out into the world, we put them free on the web. So, suddenly, instead of 500 people reading something, it was not 5000 or 10,000, it was 20,000 or 50,000, even more sometimes. This pamphlet that I am going to talk about tonight, "Cultural Diplomacy," has had more than 80,000 downloads around the world, which if I was getting paid for every copy sold, I would be very pleased about. But it is better to have it free and in the hands and minds of everyone around the world than to make a few pounds, I think.

Anyway, let me get into the subject that we are supposed to be here to talk about.

Now, cultural diplomacy is a subject that seems to be of increasing interest and concern right across the world. In fact, in the last year I have been to some places a long way from the UK. I have experienced climatic extremes of freezing Canadian winter where it really got out of hand and I have also been in the torrid Australian summer. The interest in the subject of cultural diplomacy I think is quite interesting in itself because it suggests that some kind of change is happening in the role of culture in international relations. And what I want to do tonight is to examine the shift that is happening in the role of culture and to persuade you that we need to reassess what we mean when we use this term 'Cultural Diplomacy.'

So, let me begin with a traditional view of what cultural diplomacy used to mean and that in fact I think many people still hold. In this view, we start with the idea that cultural diplomacy is a subset, a sub-division of a wider notion of public diplomacy. If you think about diplomacy itself, historically, in the pre-modern world, relations between different nation-states were

conducted through formal ambassadorial channels and international gatherings of monarchs, religious leaders or their representatives. Added to this were trading relationships that brought business and banking elites into contact with each other.

We should not underestimate the ability of people and goods to travel relatively freely in the pre-modern period. For example, the blue coloring in this 9th century manuscript, which was made in Ireland, contains Lapis Lazuli from Saudi Arabia. And from Herodotus to Marco Polo to Ibn Battuta, we have accounts of scholars, merchants and just the plain curious, traveling many thousands of miles to visit distant lands.

Having said that, the lot of the vast majority of people was to live their lives in a very narrow geographical and intellectual space. Foreign pilgrimages to Jerusalem, Santiago, or Mecca were a once-in-a-lifetime experience for a tiny minority. Mostly, people stayed within walking distance of their fields and went only as far as their local market town. So, in that world, diplomacy was essentially a matter of one elite having contact with another, elites having direct contact with each other.

In the modern era, that changed. Newspapers, books, radio and TV broadcasting meant that people began forming their opinions through common media. Nation-states responded by inventing the concept of public diplomacy; in other words, the idea that governments could and should transmit messages directly to the populations of other countries.

This was done in some very crude ways, like the propaganda leaflets dropped into combatant nations in wartime. It was also done in direct ways like establishing radio stations to beam news and other programs abroad. And it was done in some covert and subtle ways, like the CIA indirectly funding the display of abstract expressionist art in order to demonstrate American values of freedom in the 1950s.

So, in the modern era, we moved from contact between nations and people being restricted to conversations between a few people in elite groups to a situation where elite groups and government additionally attempt to communicate with whole populations. So, in modern times then we have elite to elite communication and elite to mass communication.

In these circumstances we can talk about soft power, because it makes sense for governments to think in terms of pursuing their interests through a mix of force broadly conceived to include sanctions and the threat of force, which is hard power, and through means

of persuasion and influence.

But persuasion and influence only work on an audience that is receptive and increasing the chances of that audience being receptive is essentially what soft power, famously invented by the American academic Joseph Nye, is all about.

In this worldview, cultural diplomacy is a subset of public diplomacy. Here, cultural diplomacy uses the arts and culture in a number of ways. First, as a setting in which elite to elite meetings can take place on a relaxed ground outside the formal forum, business forum, or summit gathering. Secondly, it is used as a way of demonstrating the qualities, standing, and values of a nation through the display of its heritage and traditions. And third, it is one means of sending messages to whole populations through music, art, film, and so on.

There are several points to stress about this model. At a very basic level, it assumes that politics creates the space in which the arts and culture can operate. The belief is that political agreements and political arrangements and political relations enable cultural exchange and artistic expression, because taxes and governments fund the culture and diplomats and government agencies operate the systems of cultural diplomacy.

The next assumption is that the point of cultural diplomacy is to exercise power. Soft power is still power. It is still about achieving your own aims, it is just that it is done in more peaceful and subtle and cost-effective ways. Finally, there is the assumption that governments can manage this activity even when they are being hands-off or not in direct control.

What I want to argue tonight is that all three of those assumptions are incorrect. Rather than politics creating the space for culture, we should think of culture as creating the operating conditions of politics. Rather than thinking about culture as a tool for exercising power, we should think of culture in terms of mutuality and respect. And finally, we must also accept that governments have very little control over what happens in the cultural world.

So in this new model, rather than thinking of cultural diplomacy as a subset of public diplomacy, we should think of it as a subset of cultural relations. And in the field of cultural relations, we've seen a radical transformation over a very short period of time. To explain why this has happened, we need first of all to look at the way that the meaning of culture has itself changed over the last half-century.

There was a time, back in the 20th century when a spade was a spade and not a postmodern designer implement with the embedded potential to move earth. But even then, we had a lot of trouble with this world culture. For a really compelling discussion of it, I would point you in the direction of this man, the Cambridge professor and cultural critic, Raymond Williams, and his seminal book "Keywords."

When Raymond Williams was writing, culture was principally used in two senses and most people still think of it in this way. On the one hand it meant the arts, and the arts were an established canon of art forms: opera, ballet, poetry, literature, painting, sculpture, music, and drama. These arts each contained their own hierarchies and they were enjoyed by only a small part of society, a part of society that was also, generally speaking, well-educated and rich.

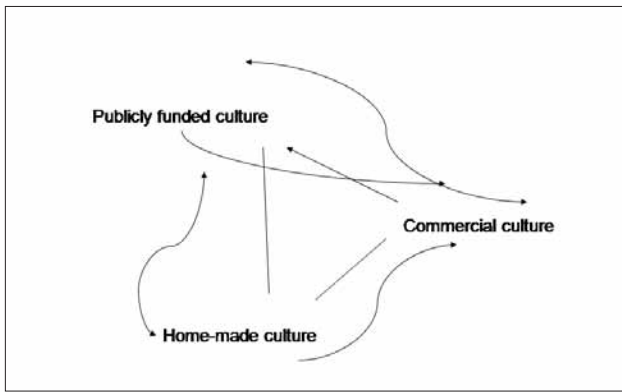
This social group defined its own social standing not just through money and education but through the very act of appreciating the arts, and thus artistic consumption and social status became synonymous, causing the arts to be labeled as elitist. But culture also had a different meaning than the arts, an anthropological meaning that extended to include everything that we did to express and to understand ourselves, from cooking, to football, to dancing to watching television.

Now, these two meanings of culture led to a lot of confusion because they were essentially oppositional. Culture in the sense of the arts and popular culture were mutually exclusive: one was high, the other low; one refined, the other debased. As an individual, you could aspire to high culture but by definition high culture could never be adopted by the mass. If it was adopted by everyone, it would no longer be high culture.

The confusion caused by these two essentially contradictory notions of what culture meant led to all sorts of curious consequences, not least in politics where approaches to culture cut across divisions of left and right. You can find the arts attacked from the left for being an exclusive, middle-class pursuit, and attacked by the monetarists of the Reaganite and Thatcherite right for being an interference with the market.

But you can also find the arts defended on the left for being one of those good things in life that everyone should have access to and defended on the right as being a civilizing and calming influence on society.

So this old 20th century model of culture then, this either/or model, is now outmoded. We now have to



understand a new reality. And that means that we have to abandon these old ideas about culture as a set of oppositional binaries of high/low, refined/debased, elitist/popular. This new reality demands a different way of looking at what culture means, and hence, new ways of looking at the value of the arts and culture in society. It demands a shift in the political response to culture and it requires changes in the way that cultural funders and cultural organizations go about their business. It presents a new set of opportunities and a new set of challenges for everyone involved, not least in this field of cultural diplomacy.

So let me now try to explain how I see this new reality.

I think that now, for practical purposes, there are three deeply interrelated spheres of culture: publicly-funded culture, commercial culture, and home-made culture. They are not separate, they are not in opposition, they are completely intertwined, but they are different from each other in important ways.

In publicly-funded culture, culture is not defined through theory; it is defined by practice. What gets funded becomes culture. This pragmatic approach has allowed an expansion of what culture in this sense means so that it can now include things like circus, puppetry and street art, as well as opera and ballet. So, who makes these decisions about what to fund, and hence to define this type of culture is therefore a matter of considerable public interest. For example, official responses to the cultural production of different community, social, ethnic and faith groups carries deep significance in terms of validating or accepting different cultures within the definition of society and the definition of what government sees as culture.

Commercial culture is equally pragmatically defined. If someone thinks there is a chance that a song or a show will sell, it gets produced. But the consumer is the ultimate arbiter of commercial culture. Success or failure is market-driven, but access to that market, the elusive big bucks record deal that Bruce Springsteen sings about in "Rosalita," the stage debut,

the publication of the first novel, all that is controlled by a commercial Mandarin class that is just as powerful as the bureaucrats of publicly-funded culture.

So, in these first two cases: publicly-funded culture and commercial culture, there are gatekeepers who define the meaning of culture through their decisions.

Finally, there is home-made culture, which extends from the historic objects and activities of folk art through to the postmodern punk garage band and the YouTube upload. Here, the definition of what counts as culture is much broader. It is defined by an informal, self-selecting peer group, and the barriers to entry are much lower. Knitting a sweater, inventing a new recipe, writing a song and posting it on MySpace might involve a great deal of skill, but can be done cheaply and without much difficulty. And the decision about the quality of what is produced then lies not with a gatekeeper but in the hands of those people who see it and hear it or taste the finished article.

Now, in all three of these spheres, individuals take on positions as producers, consumers, authors, readers, performers, audiences. Each of us is able to move through different roles with increasing fluidity, creating and updating our identities as we go. Artists travel freely between the funded, commercial, and home-made sectors. For instance, a publicly-funded orchestra makes commercial recordings and they get sold in record shops and they get exchanged on file-sharing websites. Street fashion inspires commercial fashion, and an indie band might get a record deal and then play in a publicly-funded music venue.

The rapid and enormous expansion of the internet as a space for cultural communication and as an enabler of mass creativity has changed the possibilities for all three spheres of culture and all forms of cultural expression within them, because it presents across the board a wealth of new opportunities such as new audiences, new art forms, new distribution channels; and also a set of questions: what to do about intellectual property, what to do about investment in technology, how to cope with censorship, for example.

Crucially, it has changed the debate about quality, from being one where the arts are naturally superior, to popular culture, to a debate where quality is debated in niches wherever it is found. So we now ask: is that a good TV program? Was that a fine performance of Othello? How do these jazz players rate? And so on.

The internet is credited with driving the mass creativity that is found in home-made culture, but in reality it is only one of the factors that explains it.

Cheap musical instruments, the availability of digital camcorders instead of expensive film, new public investment in galleries and theatres, the education system, all these things have played a part. And as you can see from that list, the public, the commercial, and the home-made have become inextricably linked and interconnected, riffing off each other and feeding off each other. So we now have an overall culture where these three spheres are very intensely networked.

So, does this matter? Is this switch from a binary model of high art and popular culture to a triple model of funded, commercial and home-made culture, is this anything other than a nice theoretical exercise? Well, as you might guess, my answer to that is very definitely yes; it is profoundly important, it has changed the world. Let me explain why.

Under the old model, politics could confine cultural policy to a very narrow field, and hence it had a very low priority for governments. In the old model, popular culture could be left to its own devices. You might want to put some limits on the content of books and films and censor them, you might want to license the playing of music in bars and pubs, but popular culture could more or less get on with it. As for the arts, so-called high culture, well, there you might want more people to have access to it because you think that is a good thing; you might want to argue that as a matter of national status, you should have a gallery and an opera house; but you would conceive of culture as something essentially peripheral, a leisure pursuit, an ornament to society, something to be afforded and indulged once the hard business of the day was done.

Under the old model, all three types of culture appear weak and defective. Publicly-funded culture can be dismissed as an elitist minority pursuit, commercial culture can be scorned as low-brow entertainment, and home-made culture can be patronized as amateur recreation. But put all three of these things together and what you have is, to quote the Head of Culture in Barcelona, Jordi Marti, "the second ecosystem of humankind" because now culture is everywhere. We are all listening, reading, watching, doing, and making the entire time, the whole time. This means that cultural policy can no longer be confined to a small budget line and the narrow set of questions about art. On the contrary, if we understand culture in the terms that I have outlined, as a networked activity where funded, home-made, and commercial culture are so deeply interconnected, then we can start to appreciate the wider value of culture in and to society.

Let me give you three examples. The first relates to the economy. Creative work, brain work, added value

from design and from cultural production are an increasingly important feature of successful economies. Indeed in the UK, it is this part of the economy that has shown the most rapid growth over the last 20 years; in fact, across the whole OECD. In London, the creative economy is now equal in size, possibly even bigger, than the financial services industry, and it employs more people, something that even 20 years ago would have been unthinkable. And this strikingly successful performance in things like film, fashion and music has created enormous prosperity and huge economic spinoffs.

Significantly, the areas of the economy that appear to be weathering the credit crunch best are related to the cultural and creative industries. In London, theatre bookings are at their highest ever historical level and galleries are packed. This is partly because tourism is holding up as the currency has weakened. But there is something else going on as well.

What is happening? Well, I think that people are starting to value experiences, things that give their lives meaning. They are letting go of the consumption of goods sooner than letting go of their consumption and the production of culture. So even looked at and valued just from this narrow economic perspective, culture has become much more important in its own right, and also across a much broader canvas. The culturally-driven industries are having not just an economic but a social impact right across the planet. Think how fashion connects art schools in London with factories in Bangladesh and how magazine photography links Milan with Tokyo.

The second example of the increasing importance of culture is in relation to identity, where we now define ourselves not so much through our jobs because those come and go and not so much by our geography because we commute and we move around, but by our cultural consumption and production. I am who I am and you are who you are because of what we watch, read, listen to, write, and play.

Again, this has a global dimension. Identity formation through culture no longer means adopting a narrow set of cultural forms and inherited traditions. We can now have access to, become enthusiasts for, and start to play with cultures from all over the world. This is true not just in cosmopolitan cities where, for example, in London on any night of the week, I can watch Indian Katha dance, I can listen to reggae, I can see the work of a Chinese artist. It is happening everywhere.

For example, I will never forget, 10 years ago,

dancing to a Jackson 5 song played on home-made instruments around a campfire four days walk from the nearest road in Central Madagascar.

The third example of somewhere where culture has become much more important is of course in foreign relations. Mass tourism, 24 hour news, cheap flights, internet news and citizen journalism have combined to shrink the world. Because of these changes, we are all having much more interaction with and exposure to other people and other nations. We encounter difference at every turn. What happens on the streets of New York one minute can lead to riots in Islamabad the next. In these circumstances, we understand each other and misunderstand each other as well through the medium of culture.

This has a number of serious implications for international relations and indeed for the nature of artistic production. To begin with, no longer do we have relatively separate artistic cultures developing in isolation within their own traditions. Instead, we have cultures that mix, mingle and morph to create something new. Artistic exchange of course is not new, you only have to look at the history of the Silk Road or read the Nobel Prize winner Orhan Pamuk's book "My Name is Red" to realize that. But the capacity of artists to work together and to share what they do more widely has grown over the last 10 years in a way that marks a fundamental shift.

On top of that, the way that cultures encounter each other has essentially changed. I described the history of cultural relations earlier in this talk, starting with one elite getting together with another, and then having an additional dimension of an elite giving cultural messages to mass audiences. Both of these things still happen, but we have now shifted fundamentally and irrevocably to a new model where we also have mass peer-to-peer cultural contact.

And the fact of mass peer-to-peer cultural contact increases the importance of culture as a factor in how nations relate to each other. For example, the way that a museum in Germany deals with objects from, to take just an example, Turkey, the way that it interprets, respects or fails to respect that country's culture matters, because when millions of Turkish visitors or migrants see their own culture valued, that provides one of the building blocks that gives the German government a certain license to operate in the world. And it also means, to take another example, that the way that ancient Persians are portrayed in a Hollywood film becomes significant in a way that goes way beyond the questions of aesthetics or artistic quality. It affects relations between governments.

I would argue further that in cultural relations, because of mass peer-to-peer contact, we are moving away from the idea of soft power exercised by one party upon another and towards one of mutuality based on equal cultural respect. The arena of culture is one where nations can meet on equal terms regardless of their economic wealth or military capability. It is a sphere in which the small, the poor, the marginalized can stand tall and proud; a place where, if you like, Bob Marley and Bob Dylan can look each other in the eye.

I have noticed in my own country, the United Kingdom, that the people in the smaller nations of Wales and Scotland have a different relationship with their inherited culture than we do in the larger nation of England. In the Celtic nations, people are aware of their cultures in a much more visceral way as markers of their distinctiveness and identity than we tend to be in England. That can have healthy effects in nurturing a sense of history, rootedness, solidarity, and community but it can also have a less healthy effect in promoting exclusivity, intolerance and the ossification of culture, by which I mean that cultural forms can fail to develop and grow. This is a cultural conundrum for small and possibly for large nations.

But to return to my theme, in all these three examples, the economy, identity formation and foreign relations, culture has moved from being something at the sidelines to something at the center. That profoundly changes how we should value culture and how we should judge the significance of culture.

It also makes cultural policy a lot more complicated. For instance, whereas giving a 13-year-old schoolchild the opportunity to visit a museum might once have been nice to have experience that brought a civilizing influence to bear on a young mind, now a visit to a museum is an essential part of plugging that young person into this network of tripartite culture. And that will affect the young person's job prospects, their ability to operate in a globalized community, and their sense of individual and social identity.

And just as cultural policy is now interconnected with wider issues, so too do those wider issues affect what happens in culture. For instance, we need to be thinking about how visa policies affect visiting artists, and hence, international relations; how planning policies act to create or destroy the growth of the creative industries. Above all, we need to think about education policy and how education can release the creative talents of everyone and not just those destined for a career in the arts.

Cultural policy interventions then are becoming

much more complicated because they need to happen in all sorts of places right across this mix of funded, commercial, and home-made culture and indeed well beyond. In fact, this is already happening although it is not widely acknowledged. In the United States, in an online article, in the Huffington Post, the head of the Kennedy Center in New York, Michael Kaiser, recently said, "Most people do not know that no fewer than nine government agencies provide support to arts in the USA. That is not a typo." he says. "In addition to the National Endowment for the Arts, the National Endowment for the Humanities and the Institute of Museum and Library Services, the traditional places that you would expect to fund culture," he says, "arts money is also granted by the Departments of Commerce, Education, State," that is foreign relations, "Agriculture, Defense and Transportation."

The same thing applies in the United Kingdom. I will have no doubt it applies in many other countries as well. So culture is in fact not just within one ministry; it is everywhere.

But one problem that cultural policy faces is how to operate in this new interconnected world of cultural diplomacy. When I and my colleagues at Demos wrote "Cultural Diplomacy," three or four years ago, we were accused of suggesting that governments should dictate what artists do. But nothing could be farther from the truth. Right at the start we say, "this report does not argue that culture should be used as a tool of public diplomacy." In fact, if governments do try to exercise control, it completely undermines their chances of success. The British peer Lord Carter put it like this when talking about the broadcast media, when he said, "If the BBC World Service were to carry a byline stating working in a manner consistent with governmental medium and long-term goals, then its international credibility would be fatally undermined."

This question of whether cultural diplomacy implies government control over artists goes to the heart of the relationship between the arts and politics; a relationship that is already very complex and ambivalent. Let me just explore this relationship for a minute.

The American writer Philip Roth described the difference between politics and the arts in these terms. He says, "Politics is the great generalizer and literature the great particularizer. And not only are they in an inverse relationship to each other, they are in an antagonistic relationship. How can you be an artist and renounce the nuance?" he asks. "But how can you be a politician and allow the nuance?"

Stravinsky was making a similar point when he

wrote, "It's the individual that matters, never the mass. The mass in relationship to art is a quantitative term which has never once entered into my consideration," he says.

And from a political perspective, Lenin put it another way when he said that he hated listening to Beethoven because it made him want to caress people's heads when he should be banging them together.

The point here is that politics wants to achieve mass social outcomes. And so it values culture in terms of what culture can do to achieve those outcomes, whether that is better recovery times in hospitals or integrating refugees into society, or improving international relations through cultural diplomacy. All of these things of course are perfectly worthy and sensible aims.

Politics will always want to look at culture in this way; it makes perfect sense. And this means that politics will always have a highly ambivalent relationship with culture, being pulled in two directions at the same time. Because while it wants to control the outcomes of culture and to know that when it invests money it is getting results, it also wishes to distance itself from culture. We can see that clearly in Western democracies where politicians have been keen to detach themselves from decisions about funding the arts and so they generally do it through arm's length agencies, like arts councils.

Why is that? I think there are a number of reasons and they are these. First of all, there is a historical explanation. These cultural funding systems were set up at the start of the Cold War with the communist bloc and Western democracies did not want the arts to enforce state ideologies. Second, politicians did not and do not want to be answerable for what artists do. Who can blame them? Art pushes boundaries; sometimes it is deliberately offensive and provocative. That is one of arts' jobs.

I had a conversation last year with the minister for culture of one country, who was very relieved that the arm's length principle meant that he did not have to defend some artists who were being pilloried in the press. As he put it, "I'm as broad-minded as the next person, but painting trees blue, well, that's just ridiculous!"

The third reason why the arts and politics can be uneasy bedfellows is because the arts are about things that politics does not really approve of. The arts are creative, they are risk-taking, and one of the jobs of politics is to reduce risks, to minimize uncertainty. Politics does not like surprises. It wants to invest on the

basis of hard evidence, knowing that if it spends X, it will save Y. And as I have just been saying, culture and the arts are not always easily measurable and predictable. On top of that, the arts can be oppositional and challenging, and politics do not like opposition either. Politicians sometimes say they are like opposition, but it is a bit like hearing the chief executive of a company saying that he welcomes competition, it never really rings true.

So there are all these good reasons why politicians want to keep some distance from culture, but on the other hand, good reasons why they want to interfere in the arts, to try to make sure that the arts are achieving the politician's wider goals for society, and to make sure that public funding is properly accountable. When it comes to cultural diplomacy then, governments are going to experience this tension where they recognize the artist must be independent and free but they cannot ignore the new reality of global cultural interconnectedness and the role that culture plays in international relations.

Perhaps, a way out of this difficulty of artistic autonomy versus political control lies in taking the emphasis away from politicians and artists and thinking instead about what rights people in general should have in relation to the international aspects of culture. So let us forget politicians, let us forget artists, let us concentrate on people.

Here, the American writer and former chairman of the US National Endowment for the Arts, Bill Ivey, has some interesting things to say in his book "Arts, Inc." He argues that the population at large should have a series of rights in relation to their cultural life. In relation to cultural diplomacy, the three most important rights, and I am paraphrasing here, not using Bill Ivey's exact words, are: first, the right to know about and explore art of the highest quality that has survived around the globe; second, the right to be exposed to the artistic practice of artists at work today; and third, the right to have one's own culture represented faithfully to the rest of the world.

These concepts are not without difficulty, not least the implication that nations display some cultural homogeneity and that there is a set of shared values around culture that apply across a whole society. Nevertheless, I think that Bill Ivey has started a debate and a line of thinking that is worth exploring in relation to cultural diplomacy, by focusing on the public, and people, and individuals, rather than on the relationship between governments. Essentially, this means shifting from a model where cultural diplomacy is the concern of elites, artists, politicians, and professionals to a model where we are all involved. Because as we put it right at the beginning of our Demos pamphlet, we are all diplomats now.

Thank you.

John Holden (City University, UK)

John Holden was Head of Culture at the London-based independent think tank Demos until September 2008. He has Masters Degrees in law and art history and his main professional interest is in the development of people and organisations in the cultural sector. He has been involved in numerous major projects across the sector, from libraries to music to heritage, and has worked with many organisations both large and small. He was a principal organiser of the influential Valuing Culture conference in June 2003, and has developed a theme of work around the topic of cultural value. He has spoken at many conferences in the UK, and also in Finland, the U.S., Australia and New Zealand. John is a member of the Management Committee of the Clore Leadership Programme and a Fellow of the Royal Society of Arts (UK).



About the Japan Foundation [www.jpff.go.jp](http://www.jpff.go.jp)

The Japan Foundation, established in 1972, aims to promote international cultural exchange through the implementation of comprehensive programs as an independent administrative institution under the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. With its global network consisting of the Tokyo headquarters, a Kyoto office, two domestic Japanese-language institutes and 22 overseas offices in 20 countries, the Foundation operates programmes often in partnership with other organisations, focusing mainly on three areas: Arts and Cultural Exchange, Japanese-Language Education Overseas, and Japanese Studies and Intellectual Exchange.



About the British Council [www.britishcouncil.or.jp](http://www.britishcouncil.or.jp)

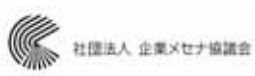
The British Council is the UK's public organization for educational opportunities and cultural relations. Established by the UK government in 1934, the Council operates in over 100 countries worldwide. We build trust, engagement and opportunities, reaching over 128 million people worldwide each year. In Japan, the Council has centres in Tokyo and Osaka and runs English courses, provides information on studying in the UK and introduces the latest of contemporary UK in the fields of Arts, Science and education.



社団法人 企業メセナ協議会

About the Kigyo Mecenat Kyogikai (the Association for Corporate Support of the Arts)  
[www.mecenat.or.jp](http://www.mecenat.or.jp)

Kigyo Mecenat Kyogikai (KMK: Association for Corporate Support of the Arts, Japan) was founded by private corporations as Japan's first non-profit association devoted to promoting corporate support of the arts in 1990. The promotion of positive support of the arts by Japan's leading corporations is the challenge facing KMK. KMK continues to undertake the arduous task of building an infrastructure for cultural support. To achieve this mission, KMK conducts research, surveys, seminars and other programs to promote partnerships between businesses and the arts and provides information and statistical data related to corporate support of the arts.



Values Without Borders: "Cultural Diplomacy" Starts At Home

March 11th, 2010  
International House of Japan